

will enable more veterans to be eligible for VA health care.

This legislation also includes S. 131, the Women Veterans and Other Health Care Improvements Act of 2013. With the widespread use of improvised explosive devices throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, both female and male servicemembers have found themselves with increased risk of spinal cord, reproductive, and urinary tract injury. Many of these veterans dreamed of starting a family, but their injuries prevented them from conceiving, and this legislation will help them fulfill their dreams.

We have three more important provisions I want to briefly touch upon, and that is, once again, the restoration of full COLA for all military retirees. In an effort to address concerns regarding the cost-of-living adjustments for all military retirees, this bill would reaffirm the commitment Congress made to our servicemembers and veterans by ensuring consistent and appropriate funding for military retirees and veterans. This very important provision is in this legislation.

Furthermore, there has been a concern that many CBOCs, community-based outreach clinics, that have been planned all over this country have been unable to be built for a variety of technical reasons. We addressed that issue as well. This bill also improves access to mental health treatment for veterans.

Let me conclude by saying we give a lot of speeches about the respect we have for the men and women who put their lives on the line to defend this country. They have come forward through the veterans committee and they have said: We have concerns. We have concerns about health care; we have concerns about how quickly the benefits that we apply for come to us. They have been very loud and clear in saying—and we agree with them—that it is unacceptable that pensions promised to veterans have been cut. There have been many other issues dealing with employment and dealing with education.

What this bill does in a comprehensive way is to say to the veterans of this country—the millions and millions of people who have given so much to us—we hear your concerns. We hear your concerns, and we are going to address your concerns.

I want to take this moment to thank majority leader Senator REID. He has been very supportive of not only veterans in general but supportive of this effort to make sure we keep our promises to the veterans of this country. That bill has been introduced. My hope is we can get it to the floor as soon as possible.

I hope very much that although there is a partisan climate, that on this issue of keeping our promises to the men and women who have put their lives on the line to defend this country, we can come together as a Senate and as a House and have the President sign this

bill which will mean so much to so many.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking Chairman SANDERS of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, where I serve, for his extraordinary vision and leadership and join him in thanking the majority leader for his commitment to this kind of comprehensive and aggressive approach to revise and reinvigorate, reinvent and reform, veterans programs in a comprehensive and overarching approach.

I will be speaking at greater length in the days and weeks to come, but I want to join the Senator in committing all of us—I hope on a bipartisan basis—to this effort to fix the flaws and fulfill the vision this Nation owes to the men and women who have served and sacrificed year after year.

This program recognizes a fundamental truth: We are dealing with different populations of different ages, and within those populations, people with different needs and challenges, and a comprehensive program is necessary to address the obligation. It is an obligation we owe them to make sure that we leave no veteran behind and keep faith with every man and woman who has served and sacrificed for this Nation.

It fixes the flaws of the last budget agreement that reduced the cost-of-living adjustment on retirees' pensions. It commits the Nation to economic opportunity and real jobs—training for the jobs that exist now and the jobs of the future. It reforms loan and aid programs for college education and also for noncollege education.

It addresses the gaps in health care, not just by promising but performing. And, of course, it will also necessarily help veterans who may be preyed upon by schemes and scams, legal or illegal, and that is a very desperate and challenging need for this Nation to address, and hopefully it will do so on a bipartisan basis.

There should be no reason and no justification for opposing an effort that is paid for—and I stress paid for. My hope is we will have bipartisan support for this visionary and courageous measure that says to America's veterans: We will keep faith with you. We will leave no veteran behind.

One of the first promises I made 3 years ago in the first speech I gave on the floor of this Chamber was I would work and fight aggressively for the veterans of this Nation. I intend to work for this program—work to improve it—and continue to listen to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the American Legion, and all of the groups that represent our veterans so ably, and speak for them. The voices and faces of Connecticut's veterans have been with me always, and I see them always when I return. I will work tirelessly for this program.

Again, my thanks to all of the members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee who will be supporting this program, and to our chairman Senator SANDERS for his great leadership.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. JOHANNIS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. JOHNSON, of Wisconsin, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BURR, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LEE, Mr. COATS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S.J. Res. 30. A joint resolution to disapprove a rule of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to greenhouse gas emissions from electric utility generating units; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

S.J. RES. 30

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to new source performance standards for emissions of carbon dioxide for new affected fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units (published at 79 Fed. Reg. 1430 (January 8, 2014)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

SENATE RESOLUTION 333—STRONGLY RECOMMENDING THAT THE UNITED STATES RENEGOTIATE THE RETURN OF THE IRAQI JEWISH ARCHIVE TO IRAQ

Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 333

Whereas, before the mid-20th century, Baghdad had been a center of Jewish life, culture, and scholarship, dating back to 721 BC;

Whereas, as recently as 1940, Jews made up 25 percent of Baghdad's population;

Whereas, in the 1930's and 1940's, under the leadership of Rasheed Ali, anti-Jewish discrimination increased drastically, including the June 1-2, 1941, Farhud pogrom, in which nearly 180 Jews were killed;

Whereas, in 1948, Zionism was added to the Iraqi criminal code as punishable by death;

Whereas, throughout 1950-1953, Jews were allowed to leave Iraq under the condition that they renounce their citizenship;

Whereas, as result of past persecution, few Jews remain in Iraq today, and many left their possessions and treasured artifacts behind;